

III. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1-6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) Packaging machine for sealing a packaging container, ~~according to claim 1~~ the packaging container having a tray and a lid, the packaging machine comprising:

~~having an upper part and a lower part arranged vertically moveable against each other, the lower part containing a receptacle for holding the tray; characterised in that the packaging machine comprises:~~

~~— means for opening the container,~~

~~— means for evacuation and preferably means for exchanging gas inside the container and~~

~~— means for sealing the container,~~ having an upper part and a lower part;

means for opening the container comprising at least three vertically arranged pins, said pins being mounted on springs adapted to urge the pins in an upward motion; and

wherein the pins and the receptacle for holding the tray being vertically moveable relative to each other, the pins being located at the horizontal circumference of the tray, so that the upper part of the sealing means, while moving downwards, push the pins downward, against the spring, until the upper

part of the sealing means is in operative association with the lower part of the sealing means.

8. (currently amended) The Ppackaging machine according to claim 7, ~~characterised in that the lower part contains a receptacle for holding the tray and that means are lifting means~~wherein the pins engage the lid for opening the container by lifting the lid from the tray.

9. (currently amended) The Ppackaging machine according to claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the lower part contains a receptacle for holding the tray and that opening means keep the lid in its fixed position while the receptacle is moved downwards.

10. (currently amended) ~~Packaging~~—The packaging machine according to claim 7, ~~characterised in that the lower part contains a receptacle for holding the tray and that~~wherein the container is opened by the opening means lifting off the lid from the tray and the receptacle moving downwards.

11. (currently amended) ~~Packaging~~—The packaging machine according to claim 7, ~~characterised~~ wherein the area of lid includes parts that protrude outward from the area of the tray and in that the means ~~pins~~ act upon those parts of the area of the lid which protrude ~~to~~ from the area of the tray.

12. (currently amended) ~~Packaging—The packaging machine~~ according to claim 7, ~~characterised wherein the means for opening the container comprise~~in that the means are at least three, preferably four vertically arranged pins located at ~~the~~a horizontal circumference of the tray and which extend, before evacuation, ~~over~~above the ~~upper edge of the tray.~~

13-14. (cancelled)

15. (new) The packaging machine according to claim 7 further comprising means for exchanging gas inside the container.

16. (new) The packaging machine according to claim 11, wherein the means for opening the container act through openings provided in the circumferential area of the tray.